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Dixon, William, the Younger
An inquiry into the impolicy
of the continuance of the prohibi-
tion of distillation from grain,
in Great-Britain. 2d ed.

A very faint, light gray watermark of a classical building with four columns and a triangular pediment occupies the center of the page.

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Mr. George R. Green
Author of the
beginning

The author

AN
INQUIRY
INTO
THE IMPOLICY
OF
CONTINUING
THE
PROHIBITION OF DISTILLATION
FROM
GRAIN.

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AN
INQUIRY
INTO
THE IMPOLICY
OF THE
CONTINUANCE
OF THE
PROHIBITION OF DISTILLATION
FROM
GRAIN,
IN GREAT-BRITAIN;
IN WHICH
ITS INJURIOUS EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURE, AND ITS
TENDENCY TO PRODUCE
A DEFICIENCY OF NATIONAL SUBSISTENCE,
ARE PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

BY WILLIAM DIXON, (JUN.) *The Young*
SECOND EDITION.

"I consider the stopping of the Distillery, economically, financially, commercially, medicinally, and in some degree morally too, as a measure rather well meant, than well considered.—It is too precious a sacrifice to prejudice."

Mr. Burke's Thoughts and Details on Scarcity.

Liverpool:

PRINTED BY G. F. HARRIS, BROTHERS,
AND SOLD BY MESSRS. WRIGHT AND CRUICKSHANK, LIVERPOOL;
AND LONGMAN, HURST, AND CO. LONDON.

1st OCTOBER, 1810.

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MONDAY

YESTERDAY'S WIT

...and the world will be better off.

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INTRODUCTION

PREFACE.

THE question, on which I have presumed to communicate my sentiments to the public, is universally acknowledged to be of great national importance ; it has been the frequent subject of long and serious deliberation in Parliament; it embraces many curious and difficult investigations ; and it has engaged the attention of writers distinguished for the most splendid talents.

Forcibly impressed with these considerations, I submit the following *Inquiry* to the public with undissembled diffidence.

The reasons which I shall proceed to state for this obtrusion of my opinions on the notice of the public will, I trust be admitted by the candid

as a sufficient apology, and will in some degree mitigate the severity of criticism.

Previously to the late Parliamentary discussion of the expediency of continuing the Prohibition of Distillation from Grain, I was impelled by various considerations to a careful examination of the question ; and the result of my investigations was communicated in circular letters to my commercial correspondents, in the hope, that it might be useful in assisting their judgment on so important a subject.. In the opinion of many sensible and unprejudiced persons, the facts, information, and reasoning, contained in those letters, possessed considerable weight. I have been induced, therefore, to give them a more extensive circulation, and to illustrate and confirm them by many additional observations, from a deep conviction, that the best interests of the country are involved in this inquiry.

It appeared also to me, that although the impolicy of excluding grain from the distilleries has been proved by many eminent writers, with great ingenuity, ability, and clearness ; yet a further elucidation of the subject was desirable at the present moment.

As a Committee of the House of Peers has lately been for some time engaged in receiving evidence relative to distillation from corn, it is by no means improbable, that notwithstanding the recent decision of the Legislature, the question will shortly be re-considered in Parliament: a publication, therefore, containing within a narrow compass the principal arguments for the permission of distillation from grain, with a particular application of them to the *present* situation of the country, cannot be deemed unseasonable, or, whatever may be its execution, altogether unprofitable.

This explanation of my motives for publishing the following work, will I trust, induce the reader to view with indulgence its numerous imperfections.

If he should receive from these pages any useful information, candour will dispose him to overlook the want of that elegance of composition, which is usually expected in inquiries connected with political economy, when he considers the peculiar disadvantages under which, in a literary undertaking, a commercial person unavoidably labors.

I dismiss this work with the most earnest solicitude for the accomplishment of the measure, the necessity of which it has been my object to establish, and on which I conceive the prosperity of the country materially to depend.

WILLIAM DIXON, JUN.

LIVERPOOL, 1ST MAY, 1810.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

SINCE the first appearance of this Publication, various circumstances have occurred, from which the reasoning contained in it derives additional weight. The apprehension of approaching scarcity is now completely dissipated by the almost unprecedented abundance of the present harvest.

This abundance has not been confined to particular districts; it has prevailed in every part of the kingdom; and not only have the crops of corn been remarkably luxuriant, but a longer continuance of

favorable weather during the harvest has rarely been experienced. The price of corn has in consequence very rapidly and considerably declined ; and a still further reduction may be confidently anticipated.

The foreign importations of grain have been continued without the least interruption, and the supply arrived to the port of London, since January, amounts to the extraordinary quantity of **ONE MILLION of Quarters!**

The prospect then of scarcity cannot now be urged as a reason for prolonging the period of the prohibition of distillation from grain. The continuance of the prohibition, at a season of unusual plenty, is scarcely reconcileable to the principles of justice, or to the maxims of sound policy.

The expected report of the select committee of the House of Lords was laid before the House a few days prior to the prorogation of Parliament, accompanied with

the minutes of evidence taken before their Lordships. No fewer than *twenty-three* petitions from various parts of England and Scotland had been presented to Parliament, containing very forcible representations of the calamitous effects of the restrictions on corn distillation, and earnestly praying for their immediate removal. The allegations of the petitions are completely verified by the evidence delivered before the committee of the House of Lords. Combining the testimony of the most eminent agriculturalists and distillers in the country, it affords abundant confirmation of the baneful consequences to agriculture, to the revenue, and to commerce, which result from the suspension of corn distillation. It clearly proves that the measure has operated as a serious discouragement to tillage, and has been particularly injurious to the present system of Norfolk agriculture, which, according to the evidence of Mr. COKE, "is the most beautiful and the most productive in the island, which is diffusing itself in all parts of the United King-

dom, and will, no doubt, find its way generally, if mischievous restrictions and prohibitions do not check the rising spirit and enterprize of agriculture."

It appears also from the evidence, that illicit distillation is carried on in Scotland to an unprecedented extent, and that the facility of defrauding the revenue is greatly promoted by sugar distillation. It was the opinion of the Lord Advocate for Scotland, "that illicit distillation prevails in all parts of Scotland," and that the prohibition of distillation from grain had the tendency to increase the practice. It is to be hoped that the important facts stated in the evidence will tend to the removal of those prejudices, which prevent many persons from forming a correct judgment on the inexpediency of excluding grain from the distilleries; and will induce the Legislature to repeal a prohibitory act, which has been incontestibly proved to be highly detrimental to the general welfare and vital interests of the country.

Under every consideration, it appears highly improbable that a renewal of this objectionable measure will be adopted. The bill may perhaps be allowed to remain in force until the 31st December, the period of its natural expiration ; but from a view of the circumstances which have been mentioned, the suspension of the act by proclamation, agreeably to its provisions, may more reasonably be expected.

WILLIAM DIXON, JUN.

LIVERPOOL, 1ST OCTOBER, 1810.

INQUIRY,

&c. &c.

A Statement of the evils of which the prohibition of distillation from grain is productive, and an examination of the alleged NECESSITY of the measure, are requisite to a satisfactory proof of its impolicy.

Of all the evils resulting from the exclusion of grain from the distilleries, the most serious is its fatal influence on agricultural prosperity. The direct tendency of the measure is to discourage the cultivation of grain: it excites amongst the farmers dissatisfaction, perplexity and alarm, and consequently paralyzes their exertions. To the landed interest it is highly detri-

mental: it has occasioned in various places a considerable decline in the value of arable land, and many farms of this description have remained for some time unoccupied.

There are in this country extensive tracts of ground, capable of producing only barley, or inferior grain, the value of which is greatly injured by the prohibition of corn distillation.

The consumption of the English distilleries is estimated at one-sixteenth of the barley grown in England; and in the report from the committee of the House of Commons on the distillation of sugar it is expressly stated, that the “ withdrawing even this small proportion from the market, would prove injurious to the grower of barley,” security in his market being the great stimulus to the farmer’s exertions. We are moreover assured, that “ in the event of a super-abundant harvest, the restriction would be found very hurtful to the agricultural interests of the country,” and “ would prove peculiarly hard upon the farmer, and arrest him in every exertion of his

" industry;" for, as it is shewn in the report alluded to, " the farmers conceive the distilleries to be a source of greater influence on the market than they really are," and therefore the suspension operates as a greater discouragement than it ought upon the farmer in sowing his usual quantity of barley.

The whole quantity of grain used in the distilleries, in Great Britain, amounts to about 500,000 quarters*. The prohibition therefore will occasion, in the annual produce of the country, a diminution of at least that quantity, and probably of a much larger quantity, on account of the erroneous ideas which prevail amongst the farmers respecting the actual consumption of the distilleries.

* It is stated, that the quantity of corn used for distillation in Ireland is - - - 333,333 quarters. The quantity used in Scotland - 155,555 ditto. And in England, including the importation from Scotland and Ireland, - - - } 291,166 ditto.

780,054 quarters,
for the use of the distilleries of the United Empire.

The exclusion of grain from the distilleries, whilst it is thus attended with a great public evil, by reducing the means of national subsistence, at the same time injures considerably the profits of the farmers: it deprives them also of the opportunity of selling their damaged corn, which is useless as an article of food, but is applicable to purposes of distillation. This hardship is severely felt at the present moment, as it is ascertained that the accumulation of inferior grain in the country is, at this time, to an extent beyond all precedent.

From the minutes of evidence taken on the third reading of the bill (5th March last) in the House of Peers, it was clearly and satisfactorily ascertained by the united testimony of respectable and intelligent farmers and corn-factors, who were examined upon oath before their Lordships, that in those counties where *barley* is most extensively cultivated, and respecting which their immediate situation enabled them to give a distinct opinion, a very great proportion of the large barley crops of last

year was damaged by the wet weather; and in the fens of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire an inundation took place at that time to a very great extent, 70 to 100 thousand acres having been under water.

In these counties it was declared, that 3-4ths of the barley were so much damaged, as to be rendered unfit for malting or human sustenance.

The only purposes to which this very considerable quantity of inferior and damaged barley could be applied, whilst its use in the distilleries was prohibited, were in feeding horses, hogs, and beasts fattening in the yard; some of it being ground and given to beasts in the shape of flour and meal.

Such application of this grain was, however, stated to be very expensive and unprofitable; it took off a very trifling quantity; and in a few weeks, when the grass appeared, this mode of employing it would not be adopted.

With respect also to its consumption by horses, it was observed, that barley not being their natural food, nor considered

suitable or good for them, its application in this way was very sparingly and reluctantly resorted to.

It has however been objected, that such injured grain is never employed by distillers, being unfit for the purposes of distillation.

With a view to establish the fact, whether this description of grain was eligible to distillation or not, the witnesses were very particularly examined by their Lordships upon this point, and from their evidence* it appears, that this damaged barley is eligible to the purposes of distillation, to which *alone* the farmers can look for any adequate relief under their present heavy stocks; and it is to be considered, that there never was a season when there was so much grain in the county of Norfolk adapted particularly for the purposes of distillation.

The obvious and natural consequence of having no market for his barley, must be, that the farmer will discontinue the cultivation of that grain to the same extent

* See Note (A.)

as formerly. This change would be attended with considerable inconvenience, and general loss in our domestic produce of corn; for, from the peculiar nature of the land it has been clearly shewn, that great part of the county of Norfolk* could be tilled in no other way than by the turnip and barley husbandry: this is also declared to be the only good system of cultivation which could be practised, where the land is light in any part of the kingdom. Oats being an exhausting crop, if they were substituted in the place of barley, when the light lands came to be sowed again with wheat, under the general system of the Norfolk culture; they would not be in the state to produce the crop, that they would, if laid down with barley.

* Mr. Coke, member for Norfolk, stated in the House of Commons in the debate which took place 13th April, 1808, on the distillery bill, that he esteemed the cultivation of barley as almost necessary to the existence of Norfolk, which might be considered *the granary of England for barley*, and could not be injured without material injury to the whole kingdom.

The very large quantity of barley produced last year has been imputed, in a material degree, to the confident hope that the Legislature would recompense the exertions of the husbandmen, and they have been under that presumption more than ordinarily industrious: there is therefore great reason to apprehend, that the measures of the Legislature so contrary to these expectations, will repress, to an alarming extent, the exertions of the farmers in the cultivation of grain.

That the farmers of this empire should receive, from legislative consideration, that encouragement which gives zeal and alacrity to the pursuits of agriculture, is at all times to be very sincerely wished. It is by holding out adequate inducements to the cultivation of grain, that Great Britain secures to herself, against every contingency, an abundant supply of the staff of life. To disappoint then, at a season of plenty, the reasonable and just expectation of a British farmer, is ever to be deeply regretted.

The farmers are perhaps, of all classes of society, least able to bear even the tem-

porary pressure of serious losses and privations : farming is by no means a profitable occupation. Mr. Burke, in his admirable tract, entitled "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity," which was written in the year 1795, has shewn that the profits of the farmer are precarious and inconsiderable ; and his observations on that subject apply with equal force to the present period.

From the evidence lately delivered to the committee of the House of Peers, it is incontestably proved, that the farmer receives a very inadequate remuneration for the capital which he must employ, the risks to which he is exposed, and the labour which he undergoes.

The petitions lately presented to Parliament contain very forcible representations of the distresses of the farmers, in consequence of the present suspension of corn distillation, which unquestionably call for the immediate consideration of Government. A continuance of the measure will, it is apprehended, deprive many of them of the ability of paying either the taxes or their rent ; and thus a description of men,

perhaps the most deserving of the attentive regard of the Legislature, will be doomed to labour under much greater disadvantages and hardships than any other class of the community.

The injurious and embarrassing restraints imposed on farmers, in the disposal of their grain, have induced many persons to convert arable land into pasturage; and the continuance of these restraints will probably render this practice very general, the consequences of which would be of a most injurious nature, as the means of national subsistence would thus be alarmingly diminished; and the operations of farming would, in this case, require the employment of a much smaller number of the peasantry.

A further prolongation of the period of the prohibition will operate also as a serious discouragement to perseverance in those agricultural improvements which have lately been prosecuted with most patriotic ardour, and eminent success, and which have conferred very important benefits on the country.

It is impossible to calculate all the evils which will flow from a continuance of this impolitic measure: only a few effects of its pernicious tendency have been yet exhibited. The situation indeed of the farmers is at present highly distressing, and agriculture is seriously discouraged; but the effects of a long protracted suspension of corn distillation will, in all probability, be most calamitous.

The farmers have hitherto cherished the hope, that the measure would be of very short duration; that it was merely a temporary expedient; that when the alarm of approaching scarcity had subsided, their claims on the protection of the Legislature would readily be acknowledg'd. But should it be persisted in at the present moment, when there is no rational ground for the apprehension of scarcity, (as will afterwards be proved by indisputable facts,) that hope, it is to be feared, will vanish: they will be led to believe that the measure will now become permanent; and the dangerous consequences of such an idea, to

agricultural industry and prosperity, are most fervently to be deprecated.

It will scarcely be controverted, that AGRICULTURE is entitled to the uniform and zealous encouragement of the Legislature: its importance to the stability and happiness of a state, has been acknowledged by every wise Government. From the earliest to the present age of society, the agricultural have been accounted the principal interests of every country; and in consequence *their* encouragement, extension and improvement, were always held in that high and superior estimation, which they so justly merited. Every other pursuit might occasionally conduce to the amelioration of human life, in relieving or removing its inherent or accidental inconveniences, and in supplying the various luxuries, which from habit became necessary to the happy existence of man: but the support of that existence in the cultivation of the soil, and the increase of its produce, were always objects of primary consideration, as most essential to the well-being of the community.

On agriculture depend the real wealth

and strength of a country. It furnishes an internal, secure, and permanent source of revenue. It is the foundation of national prosperity, which, amidst the storms of war, remains unshaken. Affording an easy and regular provision for the wants of men, it contributes more than any other cause to an increase of population, which it has been the unceasing care of enlightened Legislators to encourage. It strengthens, in a very powerful degree, local attachment; and hence, in every country, patriotism has been observed to flourish nearly in an equal proportion to the encouragement which agriculture received.

The industrious habits and hardy frame of those who are employed in the cultivation of the ground, well qualify them to endure the toils and fatigue of war; and their loyal and courageous spirit is the surest safeguard of their country in the hour of danger.

It was the observation of a Roman writer* on agriculture, the truth of which the ex-

* Ex Agricolis et viri fortissimi et milites strenuissimi gignuntur.
CATO.

perience of all ages has confirmed, that the bravest men, and the best soldiers, are produced from the peasantry.

Without indulging any visionary and romantic ideas of rural innocence and simplicity, it may be asserted, without the hazard of contradiction, that agricultural occupations are calculated to promote purity of manners, and to invigorate religious dispositions; and it will readily be admitted, that, with the moral character of a people, the prosperity of a country is intimately connected.

It was the wise policy of the ROMAN Government to give the strongest encouragement to agriculture; its dignity, utility, and charms, were the favorite theme of their philosophers and poets; and writers, distinguished for laborious and successful investigations in political science, have agreed, in representing the flourishing state of agriculture, as one of the principal causes of the greatness of the Roman Empire, and of the warlike spirit which animated its people.

In modern times, AMERICA, by its zealous

prosecution of agricultural improvements, has risen to a high degree of splendor and prosperity, with a rapidity almost unparalleled in the history of the world.

The necessary conclusion from what has been stated is, that it is the sacred duty of every Government to guard and promote the interests of agriculture.

The solicitous attention of the Legislature of this country to the inclosure and cultivation of our extensive waste lands, thus providing for the future support of an increasing population by a more abundant supply of grain, is a manifest proof, that it is by no means unimpressed with a conviction of the high importance of agriculture; but it is obvious, from the faithful and unexaggerated account which has been given of the fatal consequences to agriculture, *arising from the prohibition of distillation from grain*, that perseverance in that measure is altogether irreconcileable with the same enlightened policy.

The consequences arising to the REVENUE from the substitution of sugar for grain in the distilleries, are of a very serious na-

ture. The annual loss has been stated at £400,000, viz.—

Defalcation to the revenue.....	£500,000
Grain, on the augmented duties } on foreign spirits	100,000
	—
	£400,000

This loss however is comparatively trivial, when we consider the incalculable injury which the revenue sustains from illicit distillation.

During the prohibition in Ireland, this fraud upon the revenue had very alarmingly increased; of the extent of it, some idea may be formed, from the following statement made by Mr. Forster, the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland:—he observed, that “ he had a return from the officers of “ excise, stating the quantity of stills seized, “ together with their size and estimate pro-“ duce; from which it appeared, that from “ the 10th January to the 10th December, “ 1808, unlicenced stills had been seized, “ capable of distilling 800,000 gallons of “ spirits per month—a quantity that would “ amount to *half a million of gallons more*

"than ever was formerly produced in Ireland within the same space of time."

The whole loss to the revenue in Ireland during the prohibition has been represented as amounting to one million annually.

It is not by a comparative view of the respective duties payable upon sugar spirit, and upon corn spirit, that the *actual* loss sustained by the revenue can be determined. In estimating the whole loss, we must take into consideration the evident decrease in the consumption consequent upon the considerable augmentation of the price of a new commodity; the nature of which is of acknowledged inferiority, and more particularly the injurious effects from illicit corn distillation.

The aggregate amount of this loss may, in a financial view, be deemed of inconsiderable magnitude, but it acquires peculiar importance at the present time, when a more than ordinary economy in the management of the resources of the empire is imperiously required.

Let it also be considered, that this money may be collected with the greatest ease, and

would willingly be paid both by the distiller and the consumer.

It is universally acknowledged, that the *Distillers* of this country who employ an immense capital, and promote a very extensive foreign, as well as domestic commerce, in an article of *British* manufacture, yielding to the revenue a most considerable annual amount* in the easiest and most prompt mode, are justly entitled to legislative consideration; and I would contend, *upon this ground*, that the long-established system of distillation from corn should not be interrupted, unless the necessity of the measure is proved by strong and incontrovertible facts.

That this prohibition however, if previously deemed necessary, should be continued when the causes that induced the measure have ceased to exist, cannot with

* It has been stated, that the *corn* distillers of England paid about one million of duty annually, and that of all the millions which contributed to the public revenue, this was the one that came into the Exchequer with the least trouble or expence to the State, and on the fairest and most honourable principles.

consistency be maintained; and that there is no necessity at present for the restriction of the free use of corn in the distilleries of the United Kingdom, will, I trust, be readily ascertained.

Whilst we acknowledge sincere satisfaction, that the use of corn in distillation has been granted to *Ireland*, because to the agricultural interests of that country it would have been utter ruin to have extended the restriction with the immense stock of oats which was accumulated; it is also at the same time to be as sincerely lamented, that the intercourse in Irish and British-made spirits between Great Britain and the sister kingdom, is unhappily, but necessarily, suspended.

The suspension of this intercourse must *inevitably* continue until the British distilleries are restored to their wonted privileges in the use of corn, for so decided is the preference given to corn over sugar spirit, that if the former was admitted to importation from Ireland, under the imposition of even an increased duty, it is highly probable that the British distiller

of sugar spirit would be obliged to abandon all competition.

Whilst then the prohibition is continued in Great Britain, a renewal of the intercourse with Ireland cannot be contemplated, and this unfortunate necessity must very much be regretted.

The advantages that would result from a mutual interchange of this commodity, and free competition between the two countries, are of infinite importance.

The prohibition is moreover highly injurious to the *general* interests of trade. The uncertainty with respect to the prolongation of the period of the prohibition, occasions to the dealers in sugar, corn, and spirit, and to the distillers, considerable embarrassment in the arrangement of their future operations; it produces great fluctuations and insecurity in the market; and this state of doubt and perplexity necessarily becomes a powerful check on fair and regular trade; which must be conducted under the most disadvantageous circumstances, in a market continually

varying with the rumours, the conjectures, and the speculations, of each day.

I have now finished the melancholy but faithful representation of the *serious evils* to *Agriculture*, the *Revenue*, and *Commerce*, from the prohibition of corn distillation; and I shall therefore proceed to the consideration of its *alleged necessity*.

The necessity of a measure, pregnant with such fatal consequences, ought undoubtedly to be perfectly clear and extremely urgent. Writers on political economy whose opinions are entitled to the highest deference, have unanimously condemned the interference* of the Legislature in regulations connected with national subsistence, except on occasions, which imperiously demand it. The dangers to be apprehended from injudicious interference are very forcibly pointed out in Mr. Burke's tract on Scarcity, a work which, at the present period more particularly merits the most serious attention.

* See Note (B.)

It is distinguished for the same inimitable energy and perspicuity of stile,—the same soundness of judgment—the same luminous arrangement of arguments—the same patient investigation of truth—the same irradiations of transcendent genius which mark the productions of that illustrious writer, on subjects the most humble, and the most sublime.

The probability of approaching scarcity has been urged as a strong proof of the absolute necessity of continuing the suspension of corn distillation.

It is undoubtedly the duty of a Government to endeavour by timely precautions, and salutary expedients, to avert so dreadful a calamity; but few questions more importunately demand deep, comprehensive, and dispassionate investigation.

The alarm of scarcity is too often easily excited, and rapidly disseminated; and the calm dictates of unprejudiced reason, have sometimes been overpowered by the violent torrent of popular passions, prejudices, and fears.

I trust that the following observations

will clearly prove that there is at present no just ground for the apprehension of scarcity. It may be admitted, that in the years 1795 and 1800, when corn distillation was prohibited, there was reason to expect the approach of scarcity, and that such expectation had a material influence on the decision of Parliament; but the circumstances of the present period are widely different; and the late renewal of the restrictions seems by no means to have proceeded from a dread of scarcity; for if the Legislature really entertained any apprehensions of that nature, how are we to account for the permission of corn distillation in Ireland?

The absurdity of a dread of scarcity is evinced by the present prices of grain: of the probability of such an event, the price of grain affords the only sure criterion.

That the present prices of barley and oats are considerably lower than at the several periods when the sugar distillation bill was determined upon, and extended, is clearly established by the following statement:—

Statement of the highest Prices of GRAIN at Mark-lane, London, and Corn-Exchange, Liverpool.

	LONDON.				LIVERPOOL.			
	Wheat.		Barley.		Oats.		Barley.	
	P. Quar.	P. Quar.	P. Quar.	P. Quar.	P. Bush.	P. Bush.	P. Bush.	Oats.
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
May 7th, 1808.—When the Bill was first read in Parliament,.....	80	0	50	0	41	0	13	0
July 1st, 1808.—Date of the Act prohibiting Distillation from Corn,	86	0	45	0	44	0	13	3
Nov. 16th, 1808.—Date of Proclamation, by the King in Council, to continue the prohibition of Corn until 40 days after the next Session of Parliament,.....	112	0	51	0	46	0	15	0
March 13th, 1809.—Date of 2d Act of Parliament,.....	108	0	47	0	40	0	15	6
Nov. 1st, 1809.—Date of 2d Proclamation, by the King in Council, to continue the prohibition of Corn in the Distilleries until 40 days after the meeting of Parliament,.....	112	0	55	0	38	0	16	0
Feb. 6th, 1810.—.....	108	0	44	0	34	0	15	6
April 21st, 1810.—.....	110	0	43	0	34	0	15	6

I have annexed* the average prices of grain in England and Wales; in the twelve maritime districts; and in Scotland, at or about the same dates: I am, however, of opinion, that such returns are by no means so satisfactory† as the report of the *exact*

* See Note (C.)

+ The average returns published in the Gazette cannot, I apprehend, be considered as the fair criterion of the *actual* state of the corn market; for, however zealous may be the exertions of those who are deputed to collect from the different markets the requisite information, I believe it will be found, and invariably acknowledged, that the difficulties under which they labor to obtain the *real* state of the sales, and the prices, are so numerous, and in many instances insurmountable, arising in a great measure from the reluctance of interested individuals to communicate accurate information; that, I am inclined to hazard the opinion, *implicit* confidence cannot with propriety or with safety, be reposed in an average estimated from such general, indeterminate and it is to be feared, in some cases, incorrect returns. Under such impression I have been induced to prefer the clear and unquestionable prices of grain in Mark-Lane and at the Corn-Exchange; nevertheless it is to be understood, that the average returns, uncertain as they are, confirm the assertion, that a material reduction has taken place in the prices

prices at Mark-Lane, London, and the Corn Exchange, Liverpool.

The former market is principally resorted to by the English distillers* for their supply of barley; and in its fluctuations it is moreover well known to possess considerable influence over every other market throughout the kingdom.

With respect to Liverpool, the constant and extensive intercourse of that port with Ireland, affords an opportunity of ascertaining, with great accuracy, the value of oats, which grain is chiefly used in the Irish distilleries.

It is therefore, by a comparative view of the prices of *barley* and *oats* in these two leading markets, that our conclusions will be most correctly determined.

of Barley and Oats, since corn distillation was prohibited.

* In the debate on the distillery question, which took place 4th December, 1801, Mr. Rose observed, that the distillers, who were in general great capitalists, were, for the most part, resident in the vicinity of London, and were supplied from *Mark-Lane*.

It must be observed, that in the statement which I have given, I have submitted the *highest* prices, in order to avoid any misconception with respect to quality, which of course is considered the best; whilst, however, the adoption of this mode has been preferred, it is necessary to notice the *lowest* prices; since there is at present an immense quantity of inferior grain in the country, and in consequence the value of the *finest* qualities is rated disproportionately high.

The *greatest* price on the 21st April last, for the *best Irish potatoe oats*, in the Liverpool market, was 4s 2d per bushel of 45lb.; and for common oats (of which one-half of the crop in Ireland consists) 3s 6d to 3s 10d per 45lb. When therefore the expences incurred in the exportation to this country are deducted from these quotations, it will be found, that the Irish farmer is experiencing, in no inconsiderable degree, a *positive loss**.

* Although distillation from grain has been permitted in Ireland, the limited extent to which it can be conducted, whilst the intercourse in Irish-made

The *highest* price of oats in the Liverpool market is shewn by the statement to be at present about 2s per bushel *below* the price when the prohibition was first proposed, and in the London market 7s per quarter. The *lowest* quotation in the latter is 18s per quarter. In this consideration, no allusion is made to damaged grain*.

With respect to *Barley*, the *highest* quotation in Mark-Lane at present is 7s per quarter *below* the price at the before-mentioned period, and 12s per quarter *below* the rate when the bill was last extended by proclamation. The lowest quota-

sights is interdicted with Great Britain, affords to the farmers a very inadequate relief.

Any *effectual* remedy is only to be expected from the *free* operations of the distillers; but this intercourse between the two countries cannot be renewed until the prohibition of distillation from corn in Great Britain is repealed. In considering therefore the agricultural interests of Great Britain, I have adverted to the situation of the Irish farmer, notwithstanding the recent indulgence of the Legislature in allowing a limited corn distillation in Ireland.

* See Note (D.)

tion is at present only 30s per quarter in London, and 5s per bushel of 36 quarts in Liverpool; the latter market is not however deserving of notice with regard to Barley, as that description of grain, it is well known has in Liverpool a very limited sale, and no corn distilleries are in its vicinity.

Although I have given *Wheat* a place in the quotations, it is scarcely necessary to mention, that this description of grain is not used for distillation, and it would not therefore be materially, if at all affected, by the proposed measure*. The present *highest* quotation of 110s per quarter is for the finest Dantzig Wheat, whilst the *lowest* price is 70s per quarter in London, and 11s 9d per bushel of 70lb. in Liverpool.

The irrefragable argument for the removal of the present restrictions on distillation which this comparative view of the prices of grain furnishes, is materially strengthened by the consideration of the extraordinary depreciation of the national currency,

* See Note (E.)

which, during the last year, various causes have produced.

It may be satisfactory to enquire into the prices of grain at former periods, when prohibitions of corn distillation have been laid on, continued, or removed: I have therefore annexed* an account of the average prices of grain in England and Wales, and also in Scotland, at the several periods respectively, from the month of July 1795, inclusive, specifying at which of the said periods respectively the distillation has been prohibited or allowed; and the prices per quarter of each grain at the time when such change took place; and also specifying the present prices, according to the latest return.

It has been objected to the opening of the distilleries to *corn*, that the prices would instantly be advanced to an alarming height, and *again* call for legislative interference; but so fallacious an argument scarcely requires refutation. Whatever *temporary* advance might take place whilst the distillers were making their purchases, for it is highly

* See Note (F.)

probable that the holders of grain would readily avail themselves of the momentary demand, it is proved by former experience, that *such advance* subsides with the impulse of the day; the market would then readily find its own level, and even should it not return to its former situation, it would at all events acquire that fair and moderate currency, which is best adapted to the interests of agriculture and commerce*.

That there is a very superabundant stock of oats in Ireland is evident from the considerable importations at this time from that country into the port of Liverpool, which will be particularly noticed on reference to the account given†.

The arrivals of grain from abroad during the last year have been to an extent fully proportionate to our accustomed foreign supplies, and even beyond the average importations of the five years mentioned in the annexed statement‡, the average calcu-

* See note (G.)

† See Note (H.)

‡ See Note (I.)

lation of each year, being about 700,000 quarters.

The foreign imports into London for the last year amount to 516,060 quarters of grain*, and no abatement in the supplies is found this year, but an increased importation; for, from the 5th January last to the 23d April, no less a quantity than 420,068 quarters of grain has arrived from abroad to the port of London.

It is here satisfactory to observe, that whilst we are receiving corn from the coast of France, where it is particularly abundant and cheap, an important facility is afforded through such commerce for the export in return of colonial produce, particularly dye-woods and coffee, for the former of which, licences are brought over. Considerable exportations to France have recently taken place, and the intercourse has been highly beneficial to the colonist.

The quantity of corn imported from the United States of America is comparatively trifling; however the material supplies from

* See Note (K.)

thence are received by the British market, either directly or circuitously. The quantity brought last year to the port of Liverpool, where the principal part of the British trade with that country is conducted, amounted to 109,694 quarters of grain.

Looking then to the immense stocks of corn in this country—to the unprecedented importations of foreign grain, of which we are daily receiving large supplies, (no less a quantity than 420,068 quarters having arrived into London since the commencement of this year—a quantity into *that port alone* in scarcely four months, which is nearly two-thirds of the usual annual importation into the whole empire,)—regarding also the very low prices of barley and oats, and more especially contemplating the distressful situation of the farmers in the great barley counties in England; I conceive it altogether impossible, that even the most credulous can be deluded by the alarm of scarcity.

The plain inference from the whole of what has been stated is, that there is in the country a positive superabundance, an im-

mense disposeable surplus-stock of grain; and consequently that the prohibition cannot be defended upon the ground of either real or apparent scarcity*.

The re-opening of the distilleries to grain would, I am convinced, have no influence in accelerating the arrival of scarcity, even if there was any reason to apprehend it. The public alarm would have an immeditate tendency to increase the price of grain; and when the price is considerably raised, then the distiller is induced, from regard to his own interest to suspend his operations in distilling from corn. Thus the high price of grain produces nearly the same effect as a prohibitory act of the legislature, only with this important difference, that it is accompanied with none of the evils of a compulsory measure. Whenever the alarming prospect of scarcity produces a

* "A most intelligent and laborious committee of
"the House of Commons, had declared it inex-
"pedient to stop the distilleries, when the price of
"barley was much higher than at present, viz.—
"48s per quarter."—*Speech of the Chancellor of
the Exchequer, 14th December, 1801.*

serious rise in the price of grain, the employment of it in distillation would be detrimental to the interests of the distillers; and hence they will voluntarily exclude it, nearly at the same time when legislative interference might be expedient, and when the use of it in the distilleries would prove injurious to the public.

I contend moreover not only that an unrestrained liberty of distilling from grain cannot be instrumental in occasioning scarcity, but would tend in no inconsiderable degree to its prevention; and that a long continuance of the prohibition of corn distillation may ultimately produce actual scarcity, and alarmingly aggravate its calamities.

Scarcely any inquiry is attended with so much difficulty as that which relates to the security and augmentation of national subsistence. Various measures have, at different times, been adopted for the accomplishment of this important object; but the result has, in many instances, completely disappointed the hopes which had with some degree of reason, been

indulged. The fact appears to be, that an abundant supply of Grain is most effectually secured by granting an unlimited freedom in its disposal. As long as the corn grower is not controuled by Legislative authority, but enjoys the liberty of sending his grain to the best market, this branch of agriculture will generally flourish. Hence the permission of corn distillation contributes to the improvement of the means of national subsistence, and consequently diminishes the risk of a scarcity.

It has the same tendency also on another account; it acts as a stimulus to the exertions of the farmer. FRANCE had, at various periods, been afflicted with dearth; and the remedies, which had been resorted to, had in general been unsuccessful. Sully permitted the exportation of corn, and plenty was the almost immediate consequence of that politic measure, which removed an odious restriction on the corn trade, and afforded to the farmer a powerful incitement to the cultivation of grain. The liberty of distilling from grain is for these

reasons, calculated to produce similar advantages.

It operates moreover in another respect to prevent scarcity. Dr. Paley* has justly remarked, that “it is a maxim, which “belongs to the productions both of nature “and of art, that *it is impossible to have enough without a superfluity.*” This maxim is particularly applicable to the point which we are considering.

When corn distillation is allowed, more corn is grown in the country than its population absolutely requires. The quantity then of grain intended for the distilleries is a disposable surplus, which, on any great emergency, may supply food to a very considerable number of persons.—It is a resource against famine.

The prohibition of distillation from grain contributes to increase the danger of scarcity, because it is an experiment restraining and embarrassing the farmer; diminishing his profits; and repressing his industry.

* See the Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, vol. ii. page 296, 12th edition.

Dr. Adam Smith*, whose opinions on subjects of this nature possess perhaps incomparably greater weight than those of any other writers, has made the following excellent observations :—“ The unlimited unrestrained freedom of the corn trade, as it is the only effectual preventive of the miseries of famine, so it is the best palliative of the inconveniences of a dearth. “ Famine has never arisen from any other cause, but the violence of a government attempting, by improper means, to remedy the inconveniences of a dearth.”

The prohibition of corn distillation is an attempt to prevent the price of corn from exceeding a certain sum ; it is an approximation to the most absurd, and the most dangerous, of all political regulations—the establishment of a maximum. The tendency of such an experiment to produce the evil, which it is intended to remedy, was lamentably exemplified in France in the years 1793 and 1794. That country was in consequence of it afflicted

* See his *Wealth of Nations*, book iv. c. 5.

with all the horrors of famine; and whoever reflects on the melancholy scene of public distress, which France then exhibited, will sincerely deprecate the adoption of any measure which approaches to the most distant resemblance to that dreadful expedient.

It cannot be expected that, under the present restrictions, if continued, the farmer will sow his usual quantity of grain: the annual deficiency in the production of grain in the country, from this cause, will amount to about 500,000 quarters, the quantity used in distillation, and which would be sufficient for the subsistence of 360,000 persons. The deficiency will probably be considerably greater, since (as it has been before observed) the farmers in general entertain an idea, that the consumption of grain in the distilleries is to an amount greatly exceeding that which is actually used.

It is also much to be feared, that if the period of the prohibition should still be protracted, after so long a continuance, and notwithstanding the low price, and our

abundant supplies of grain; the farmers will be induced to believe, that the permanent exclusion of grain from the distilleries is in the contemplation of government, the consequence of which belief would most probably be, that the quantity of grain usually sown would be diminished in a very alarming degree, and that the produce of the country would perhaps be inadequate to its consumption.

A considerable diminution moreover in the annual production of grain, would arise from the conversion of arable* into grass land, which the prohibition has occasioned, and which its continuance will consequently increase.

There exist therefore reasonable grounds for apprehending, that perseverance in the present restrictions on distillation may eventually lead to a scarcity, and will dreadfully augment the miseries of that calamity if it should really occur.

These are circumstances which unquestionably deserve the most serious consi-

* See Note (L.)

deration of those who have been the advocates for the removal of the restrictions, particularly when it is recollectcd, that for the alleviation of the evils of scarcity, we must be in a great measure dependant on the precarious supplies received from an enemy's country.

The prohibition of corn distillation has, in addition to these dangerous effects, a pernicious influence in increasing the price of provisions, and thus aggravating the distresses of the lower classes of the community.

In the evidence lately given in the House of Peers it was stated, that hogs were not to be procured in any quantity, and the price in the county of Norfolk was increased to the extravagant rate of 1s to 1s 3d per lb. for lean store. The increased price of pork and butcher's meat in general, since the spring and beginning of the summer of 1808, was particularly acknowledgd; and it was mentioned, that since that period, there had been a continual rise. It will here be recollectcd, that it was on the 1st July in that year, that the act for prohibit-

ing the use of grain in the distilleries took place; and when it is considered that the number of hogs fed from the refuse grains of the English distilleries is computed at the annual amount of 41,251 head, (which being bought at 12 stone, and sold at 18, there were thus annually produced 741,816 stone of hog's meat, worth £111,273. 8s) it may fairly be presumed, that to the want of this cheap and very applicable food, are to be ascribed the present great deficiency in the stock of live pigs, and the consequent high prices of butcher's meat in general, and pork in particular*. Whilst therefore,

“ Another cause, and that not of inconsiderable operation, tended to produce a scarcity in flesh provision. It is one, that on many accounts cannot be too much regretted, and the rather, as it was the sole *cause* of a scarcity in that article, which arose from the proceedings of men themselves: I mean the stop put to the distillery.

“ The hogs (and that would be sufficient) which were fed with the waste wash of that produce, did not demand the fourth part of the corn used by farmers in fattening them. The spirit was nearly so much clear gain to the nation. It is an odd way of making flesh cheap, to stop or check the distillery.”—*Burke on Scarcity.*

under the precarious hope of obtaining bread at a cheap rate, the use of corn in the distilleries is prohibited; let it at the same time be remembered, that the inevitable consequence is an augmented price of animal food*. If then the very considerable quantity of ordinary and damaged barley at present in the country is unfit for human

* The following statement contained in the petition to Parliament from the county of FIFE, against the present restriction on corn distillation, is deserving of particular attention.

" The present very high price of butcher's meat is
 " one of the obvious results of this measure. It is a
 " fact that its price has increased from 9s and 10s per
 " stone of 17½ lbs English, to 12s, 13s, and 14s per
 " stone ; and there is much reason to apprehend, that
 " it will rise still higher, as the large quantity of cat-
 " tle fed on the offals of the distilleries, not less than
 " 11,000 in the Lowland distilleries of Scotland alone,
 " were chiefly brought to market in that part of the
 " season yet approaching, before the first cattle fed
 " on grass are fit to be killed in the end of May or be-
 " ginning of June.

" Milk Cows, in the neighbourhood of large towns,
 " were also in use to be fed for a considerable period,
 " on the offals of the distilleries; and the price of
 " milk has also risen about one seventh part during
 " the present winter."

sustenance, and can only be confined to the purposes of feeding, what objection can reasonably be made to permit the employment of it in distillation, when by doing so, the grain is afterwards applied to the former purpose, and thereby rendered useful in both ways? It may here be mentioned, that where *illegal* distillation is conducted, the grains, after the process is over, are altogether lost, being destroyed to prevent detection. These considerations, it may be presumed, are entitled to some notice, as a further reason that the free use of corn in the distilleries should be allowed.

The increase in the value of another article of food is caused by the present mode of distillation; *sugar*, which is consumed by the poorest of the people, has, in consequence, advanced* in price very considerably.

The advocates for the substitution of sugar instead of grain in the distilleries contend, that it is justified by the necessity

* The average price of Muscovado sugar on the
25th May, 1808, was 38s 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d per cwt.
14th February, 1810, — 52 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ —
14th April, 1810, — 50 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ —

of extending relief to the West Indian merchants, who, from the peculiar circumstances of the times, are involved in unprecedented difficulties and distress ; and on this ground the measure has been strenuously defended.

In all the praises of the West Indian merchants, which their most zealous friends have expressed ;—in all the representations of their services and sufferings, I most cordially concur. As far as my own observation extends, there exists not in society a more honorable description of men. No person is impressed with sentiments of higher respect for their character than myself : no one would rejoice more sincerely in any plan for their relief, consistent with the general interests of the country. Under every circumstance, and upon every occasion, they are eminently entitled to the most attentive consideration ; and when the amount of the immense revenue derived from their extensive commerce is recollect ed, it must be acknowledg'd that they have at all times a strong claim upon the assistance and protection of the Legislature. Under such considerations it is to be hoped

that their interests will never be invaded, and that every seasonable and requisite relief will never be withheld.

But the continuance of the prohibition of distillation from grain appears to be an unwise and inadequate remedy for the distresses of the West Indian planters.

It is scarcely reconcileable with the principles of justice, that the interests of agriculture, and of general trade, should be sacrificed to promote the advantages of the colonist; inasmuch, as on the other hand, it would be unfair to infringe upon the interests of the colonist, for the purpose of assisting any other branch of industry.

It is the obvious policy of every Government to guard with the most vigilant care against benefiting one class of the community, by a measure which is attended with serious injury to another.

The object which the prohibition was at first intended to promote, viz. relief to the West Indian interests, through the consumption of sugar in the distilleries, has been accomplished for a period, even beyond

the time originally proposed and recommended*.

Thus the West Indian merchants have received considerable aid, whilst other classes of the community, equally deserving of Legislative attention, have been subjected to severe hardships.

The zealous regard of Government to the welfare of the West Indian planters, has

* " Your committee are persuaded, that the permanent adoption of this measure would be attended with great evils to the agriculture of the country; they feel it incumbent on them to state, that nothing in this evidence before them could induce a recommendation to that effect; they conceive that its frequent repetition would be still more hurtful; and nothing but the strong case so clearly made out by the West Indian interest, coupled with the loss of our trade with the countries from whence we derived a great proportion of our foreign supply, could prevail upon them to advise even this slight temporary interference (guarded as it is by the proposed limitation) with an established system of agriculture." — *Report of the committee on the distillation of sugar.*

Within the last forty years the distillation from corn has been suspended only twice before this time, viz.

From 10th July, 1795, to 1st February, 1797; and From 8th December, 1800, to 1st January, 1802.

been evinced upon many occasions. It is highly satisfactory to recollect the recent testimonies of the Legislature to the importance of our colonial possessions, and the invariable promptitude with which their interests, when endangered, have been consulted and promoted.

The heavy duties which have been imposed upon brandy and geneva, were recommended for the express purpose of increasing the consumption of colonial spirit, *Rum*, by restricting the demand for the former articles; and in order more effectually to accomplish this desireable object, Government has of late refused to grant licences for the importation of brandy and geneva, so that every benefit through this channel, which could possibly be obtained, has been conferred, whilst a considerable amount of duty to the revenue is sacrificed by this arrangement.

It should also be considered, that the late regulation for supplying the navy with rum, instead of Spanish brandy, when the price of the former does not exceed one shilling per gallon (the rate of the latter)

has afforded them very important advantages.

The *material* reduction in the duties on *coffee*, which has recently taken place, was proposed for the purpose of encouraging its consumption.

The West Indian planters have not only derived important assistance from Legislative consideration, but their interests have also been essentially promoted through another source.

The embargo and non-intercourse acts of the American Government, tending to diminish the importation of *Cotton* into this country, operated to enhance the value of that article ; and the returns which the West Indian planters received for their considerable crops of cotton were, in many instances, increased 100 per cent. above the ordinary estimates.

From these considerations it may be reasonably presumed, that the distresses which they were represented to have experienced, when enquired into by the committee appointed by the House of Commons have been in a great degree alleviated, and

the *present* situation of that respectable body may therefore be contemplated with peculiar satisfaction, as affording a very agreeable contrast to their former difficulties.

It still remains to be noticed, that the growth of sugar far exceeds the quantity that can be employed in general consumption. The fundamental evil is a redundant produce of the article, the culture of which should obviously be diminished, and proportioned to the requisite demand: the means of increasing that demand, consistently with a due regard to the protection of the revenue and agriculture, have been diligently investigated by a committee of the House of Commons.

They have, with indefatigable industry collected evidence relative to colonial produce; and they have suggested plans, which afford a better prospect of relief to the West Indian planters, than the prohibition of distillation from grain. I have annexed their *final* report on this important subject, on account of the valuable information which it contains*.

* * I have refrained from a distinct examination of

An objection, formidable not on account of its intrinsic weight, but from its connection with that most important of all Legislative considerations, public morality, has, from motives truly honorable and patriotic, been urged against the repeal of the present restrictions on distillation from corn.

It has been maintained, that such a measure would operate as an encouragement to intemperance amongst the labouring poor.

If this objection can be substantiated, no person would more strenuously oppose, or more deeply lament, the permission of resuming distillation from grain than myself; because I am impressed with a solemn conviction, that the prevalence of intemperate habits amongst the lower classes in particular, is one of the greatest calamities which can befall a country, and is a certain

the plans suggested in this report, because it is not strictly connected with the subject under immediate consideration. They are discussed with great ability and ingenuity in the Edinburgh Review, vol. xiii. page 382.

indication of its rapid approach to anarchy and ruin.

But I am also not less forcibly persuaded, that the discontinuance of the prohibition of corn spirit will not have the mischievous tendency which has been predicted.

The reasoning, with which the objection has been supported, appears to me to amount to nothing more than vague declamation, and vain surmises ; to assertions without proof, and apprehensions without foundation ; and it will readily be acknowledged, that it would be absurd to sacrifice to these the great national advantages, which would result from an unrestricted freedom of distillation.

The decided and general partiality of the lower classes to *corn* spirits is clearly ascertained, and it is a harsh measure not to gratify this partiality, on the supposition that no injurious consequences can reasonably be expected from it.

Now it may be admitted, that this preference of corn spirits will occasion an increase in the consumption of spirits ; but I contend that this increase, whilst it will

contribute to the improvement of the revenue, and to the interest of the distiller, will have no influence in the corruption of public morals.

About 60 years ago considerable alarm prevailed in this country on account of the intemperate use of distilled spirits amongst the inferior orders. The melancholy progress of the horrid vice of drunkenness, and all its lamentable consequences, were eloquently and pathetically described in the Senate, and in the pulpit, and petitions were presented to Parliament for the immediate application of an effectual remedy for so dreadful an evil.

It cannot be denied that the apprehensions which were entertained were well founded. The great cheapness of spirits then afforded the poorest of the people an opportunity of indulging with little restraint their intemperate propensities: but the high price of spirituous liquors has, of late years, considerably diminished the temptations to inebriety.

Mr. Burke, in his *Thoughts on Scarcity*, which contain a masterly and complete

refutation of the objection against spirituous liquors, speaking of general intemperance from this cause, says, “ that evil I consider “ to be wholly done away: observation “ for the last forty years, and particularly “ for the last thirty, has furnished me “ with ten instances of drunkenness from “ other causes, for one from this.”

If the present suspension of distillation from grain were immediately to cease, the *price* of corn spirit would be an effectual preventive of its general abuse.

That the alarm which we have been considering is altogether groundless is evident from the permission of corn distillation being lately granted by the Legislature to Ireland; in which country the partiality to *corn* spirit is confessedly much stronger, and prevails to a far greater extent than in Great Britain, and in which consequently increasing intemperance from this cause is more seriously to be apprehended.

A subsequent Act of Parliament has moreover reduced the duty upon corn spirits, distilled in Ireland, from 5s 8d to 2s 6d per gallon.

With respect to the moral and medicinal effects of spirituous liquors, considerable misconceptions and misrepresentations prevail. "Experience*", observes Mr. Burke, "has long since taught me very little to respect the declamations on that subject;—whether the thunder of the laws, or the thunder of eloquence, 'is hurled on gin,' always I am thunder proof. The alembic has, in my mind, furnished the world a far greater benefit and blessing, than if the *opus maximum* had been really found by chemistry, and, like Midas, we could turn every thing into gold."

The objection that spirituous liquors may be, and are often, abused, is equally applicable to every species of inebriating beverage. There are, I am inclined to think, fewer instances of intoxication from distilled spirits than from beer, and yet no person would contend that this is a sufficient reason for *its prohibition*.

That *beer* is more nutritive and more

* See *Thoughts on Scarcity*.

wholesome, may readily be conceded ; yet spirituous liquors have uses, which *it* does not possess. From their efficacy in resisting putrescence, and from their contracting power, they are highly beneficial in the prevention, the relief, and the removal, of many disorders, peculiarly incident to the labouring poor, which scanty diet, possessing little nourishment, has a tendency to produce. They conduce moreover to the preservation of health in cold and marshy situations; and they are in some degree necessary to those, who submit to the toils and are exposed to the perils of navigation. They are also, to adopt the language of Mr. Burke*, " a medicine for " the mind : under the pressure of the " cares and sorrows of our mortal con- " dition, men have at all times, and in " all countries, called in some physical aid " to their moral consolations." From the tasting of wine the poor are precluded ; the temperate use of distilled spirits is sometimes their only remedy in sickness, their

* See his *Thoughts on Scarcity*.

only palliative of bodily suffering; and it tends to exhilarate their mind, when dejected by present distress, by melancholy recollections, or by gloomy anticipations.

The impolicy of continuing the prohibition of distillation from grain, has, I trust, been sufficiently established, by the arguments which have been produced, to prove that it is both *injurious* and *unnecessary*.

A summary statement of some of the principal arguments may not be improper, as it may exhibit the proof, which they constitute, in a clearer and stronger light.

The exclusion of grain from the distilleries is particularly detrimental to the interests of agriculture: it tends to lessen the production of corn in the country, by probably a much greater quantity than that which is used in distillation: it is a restraint on agricultural industry and ardour. Under the influence of the uncertainty and alarm which it creates, the farmer is deterred from cultivating corn; he suffers

great inconvenience and embarrassment from the want of that easy, secure, and profitable market for his grain, which the distilleries afford; and as his returns are very inadequate to his labour and risks, he feels any temporary disappointment of his hopes, or interruption to his usual system of operations, as a peculiar hardship.

It *has* had a material effect on the value of landed property, particularly of such land as is peculiarly adapted for the growing of barley. It *has* produced a general preference of grazing to tillage, wherever the former was practicable; from the present discouragement of corn-growing, many acres of arable land have been turned into pasture, in consequence of which change the home production of corn must be considerably diminished.

The continuance of the measure will be attended with more serious effects than those which have been yet experienced; it will occasion great distress to the farmers, as their immense stocks of damaged barley can be consumed only in distillation. It will produce a dreadful aggravation of all those

evils, which have hitherto accompanied the prohibition of corn distillation; it will probably impress the farmers with a persuasion, that even in years of the greatest abundance, the use of grain in the distilleries will not be allowed, and consequently induce them to neglect tillage to such a degree, that the country may no longer produce the necessary supplies of grain for its population.

From the prohibition of corn distillation, the REVENUE experiences an annual loss to an enormous amount, on account of the difference in the duties of sugar and corn spirits, the disproportionate consumption of sugar spirit, and the almost incredible extent of illicit distillation.

The DISTILLERS also suffer severely from the measure; and the prosperity and security of general commerce are interrupted by it.

Every encroachment on agricultural industry; every interference in the corn trade is justifiable only by the most urgent necessity.

The prohibition of distillation from grain,

though productive of such calamitous consequences, is altogether *unnecessary*.

The prohibition is not necessary as a precaution against scarcity ; because the low price of grain, and the immense supplies which we have received from the Continent clearly prove the complete improbability of such an event ; even if it were to be apprehended, this precautionary measure would still be unnecessary, because from the consequent high price of grain, distillation from corn would cease without any legal prohibition.

Indeed the free use of grain in the distilleries is a security against scarcity, because perfect liberty in the disposal of grain, and the indefinite vent which the distilleries afford are a strong inducement to its cultivation, and because the quantity raised for the distilleries is a provision against any occasional deficiency in the crops : hence the stoppage of the distilleries, as discouraging tillage, as restricting the freedom of the corn trade, as withdrawing from the country in any emergency the surplus produce consumed in the distilleries, and as

being a forced limitation of the corn market, has a tendency to produce scarcity ; and it not only occasions a scarcity of corn, but also of provisions in general, on account of the large supplies of cheap food for cattle, which the distilleries afford.

It is an inadequate remedy to the distresses of the West Indian planters, who have, it must at the same time be considered, been greatly benefited by recent events and regulations,—who have no right to expect that on their account the general interests of the country should be sacrificed, and to whom the Legislature has suggested other and more effectual modes of relief for their difficulties.

From the whole of what has been stated, the impolicy of a measure attended with so many *serious evils*, and justified by *no necessity*, is the plain and obvious conclusion : and this is still more apparent from the consideration of the alarming aspect of the present times.

The sacrifice of a certain, easy, and considerable source of revenue, and more particularly the discouragement of agriculture,

at a period when we are engaged in a most expensive war, with an enemy, who in a time of scarcity may deprive us of our usual resources from importations of grain from the Continent, are surely repugnant to the maxims of wise policy.

The force of these arguments cannot, I imagine, be invalidated by representing them as consisting of mere gratuitous assertions, and visionary speculations ; they are supported by clear and indisputable proofs, by documents of unquestionable authority, and by evidence delivered upon oath.

Nor am I conscious of having endeavoured to magnify the dangers of the measure, which I have been considering. Sensible, that partial investigation and interested feelings are little consistent with a candid inquiry, it has at least been my object to regard, with an unbiassed judgment, the *real* merits of the question in those various points of view in which it could be examined ; and to adopt, as the foundation of all my reasoning on this important subject, the unequivocal testimony of facts.

The opinion, which I have freely deli-

vered with respect to the evils arising from the prohibition of distillation from grain, and the necessity of its immediate repeal, is not that of a solitary individual ;—it is expressed in numerous petitions from counties and agricultural societies ;—it is sanctioned by some of the most enlightened statesmen in the kingdom.

The expediency of permitting the use of grain in the distilleries has been defended with distinguished zeal and ability by a nobleman, whose wisdom, moderation, and firmness, conferred invaluable blessings on Ireland ; and he has prosecuted, with unwearyed assiduity, the investigation of this momentous subject. It is to be hoped, that his exertions in the protection of agriculture will be crowned with the same success, which attended all his measures for the security and the happiness of Ireland. The important services which he will thus render to his country, though less glorious than those performed by him in the illustrious station, which he lately filled, will *eminently* entitle him to its praises and its gratitude.

The nation now looks forward with anxious expectation to the time when this great question, involving so many important interests, will again engage the attention of the Legislature. It is most earnestly to be wished, that the consideration of it may not be deferred to any distant period. From a careful review of every circumstance, I have no hesitation in predicting, that any great delay will be attended with most serious consequences.

If the long continuance of a fluctuating policy should deprive the farmers of confidence in the security of the corn market, it will not easily be regained. If restrictive innovations, materially diminishing the profits of the corn grower, should lead to a derangement of the general system of husbandry, when their fatal tendency is proved to the conviction of the most strenuous of their present advocates, by an alarming deficiency of grain, the repeal of them at that time will probably have little influence in prevailing on the farmers again to alter their plan of operations; nor will such an alteration be immediately practicable.

But there is, I sincerely trust, no occasion for indulging such gloomy apprehensions: legislative wisdom will, doubtless, by timely remedies, avert the danger. The cause of agriculture will, it may be hoped, prevail. The petitions of so large and respectable a portion of the people will not be disregarded.

The repeal* of a prohibitory act, which threatens the destruction of agriculture, may, I think, with confidence, be anticipated.

From the speedy removal of the present restrictions on distillation, incalculable blessings will flow to the country. The farmer will pursue his occupations with undiminished alacrity, animated by the certainty of obtaining an adequate remuneration for his labours. The means of national subsistence will be augmented. The re-

* The following provision has been made in the *last Act*, which was not introduced into the former Acts for prohibiting the use of corn in distillation, viz.—“ And be it further enacted, that this Act may be varied, altered or REPEALED, by any Act to be passed in this present Session of Parliament.”

venue will be improved. Stability will be restored to general commerce.

To the gloom and despondency, which now overspread the mind of every friend to agriculture, brighter prospects will succeed. Instead of the deep and inevitable distress, in which the farmers will be involved by the continuance of the prohibition, they will be in some degree recompensed for their industry by the sale of their large stocks of damaged and inferior grain, for which there is at present no market. Instead of seeing agriculture languishing under the baneful influence of a restrictive policy, we shall see it rising with rapidity to its former flourishing state. Instead of witnessing, with melancholy presages of future dearth, the daily increasing conversion of arable land into pasture, we shall behold our fields covered with luxuriant crops of corn. Instead of contemplating, with dismay, the prospect of approaching scarcity, our fears and anxiety will be considerably diminished by the satisfactory assurance, that we are in a great measure secured against the risk of a defi-

ciency of national subsistence by the superfluous produce raised for the distilleries, which, in the contingency of unfriendly seasons, may be diverted from the purpose for which it was originally designed, and turned into food for man.

Few measures, in short, are calculated to produce more important benefits to the country, or are more essentially connected with its strength, prosperity, and happiness, than the repeal of the prohibition of distillation from corn.

NOTES:

NOTE (A.)

ONE farmer deposed, that, in former years, after the wet harvest, he has known that damaged sort of corn disposed of to distillers to be used as raw grain, as was understood in the market; and that the merchants to whom he sold it informed him, that it was purchased for that purpose. He had himself sold, he declared, barley as bad as that which had been described this year to be unmarketable, and some even worse in quality, to merchants who shipped it to Scotch distillers. The barley referred to at the former period was of inferior quality, being more vegetated than that of the last year; for altho' in the latter instance the grain was wet, yet the degree of heat was not so great as in the former. The heat exhausted the barley as much at that time as the wet had done lately; but this year he said it had turned black when steeped, and had not vegetated in double or treble the time it had done in preceding seasons.

Another farmer spoke to the same effect with respect to the sale of damaged barley for the use of the distilleries.

A corn buyer also confirmed the testimony of the two former deponents, and further stated, that he had not the smallest doubt that, if distillation was permitted, the whole of the large stock of damaged barley, which was now perishing in the granaries, might be marketable. He moreover stated, that he had known distillers to purchase the inferior sorts of barley

for distillation, in preference to the better qualities, to be used as raw grain.

Another evidence was of similar nature, with the additional observation, that in the early part of this season the barley very much deceived the maltsters: they thought it would make tolerably decent malt, and of course a considerable quantity of very bad malt is now on hand, which is unsaleable to the brewers; they would not give the price for it—it had paid a duty of 34s 8d, and was not marketable, but would certainly answer for the distillers.

NOTE (B.)

The evil consequences of Legislative interference in the corn trade appear from the following circumstance:—

" The average quantity of all kinds of grain imported into
 " Great Britain between 1710 and 1750 amounted to 20,976
 " quarters annually; the quantity exported to 665,435 quar-
 " ters: so that the balance in our favour amounted to 644,450
 " quarters. During this period it will be observed, wheat
 " could not be imported till the price amounted to 53s 4d, and
 " not even then under a duty of 16s; if above that price, and
 " not exceeding 80s, the duty 5s. But mark the difference: in
 " 1757, the corn laws were altered, and 48s was fixed as the
 " import price, and the duty 6d per quarter. Immediately
 " the exportation began to decrease; and on the average of years
 " between 1773 and 1793 the importation exceeded the expor-
 " tation by 430,157 quarters. In 1775 the imports exceeded
 " the exports by 972,400 quarters; making a difference in the
 " quantity of corn produced in the years 1750 and 1775 of no
 " less than 2,679,859 quarters." — *Anderson's Essays.*

NOTE (C. 1.)

An Account, from the Official Return for Middlesex, of the Prices of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, on the 28th May, 1808, and on the 10th February, 1810.—Ordered by the House of Lords to be printed, 5th March, 1810.

	WHEAT, per Quar.	BARLEY, per Quar.	OATS, per Quar.
Weeks ending	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
28th May, 1808 ..	80 0	47 3	47 9
10th February, 1810	94 8	39 10	29 11

NOTE (C. 2.)

An Account, from the Average Price of the Twelve Maritime Districts, of the Average Prices of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, on the 28th May, 1808, and on the 10th February, 1810.

	WHEAT, per Quar.	BARLEY, per Quar.	OATS, per Quar.
Weeks ending	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
28th May, 1808 ..	79 5	43 7	36 11
10th February, 1810	96 6	44 8	25 6

NOTE (C. 3.)

An Account of the Prices of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, in Scotland, in the Four Weeks preceding the 15th May, 1808, and the 10th February, 1810.

	WHEAT, per Quar.	BARLEY, per Quar.	OATS, per Quar.
Average of the Four Weeks preceding the 15th May, 1808	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Average of the Four Weeks preceding the 10th Febru- ary, 1810	77 8	38 5	27 1

NOTE (C. 4.)

An Account of the Average Prices of Grain in England and Wales, at the several periods when the Sugar Distillation Bill was determined upon and extended.

		WHEAT, per Quar.	BARLEY, per Quar.	OATS, per Quar.		
					s.	d.
May	7th, 1808..	When the Bill was first read in Parliament	72	0	40	8
July	2d, 1808..	Date of the Act prohibiting Distillation from Corn	81.	1	44	7
Nov.	19th, 1808..	Date of Proclamation, by the King in Council, to continue the prohibition of Corn until Forty Days after the next Session of Parliament	92	7	45	10
March	11th, 1809..	Date of second Act of Parliament	95	7	46	6
Oct.	28th, 1809..	Date of second Proclamation, by the King in Council, prohibiting the use of Corn in the Distilleries until Forty Days after the meeting of Parliament	102	3	51	11
Feb.	10th, 1810..	.....	100	0	48	1
April	14th, 1810..	.....	104	11	47	4
					28	3

N. B. The Prices cannot be given for the particular days when the Sugar Distillation Bill was determined upon and extended, as the Returns are only made weekly.

NOTE (D.)

It was stated in the evidence before the Lords (to which I have had occasion repeatedly to refer) that the price at which *damaged* barley rated was 20s a 24s up to 26s per quarter, and the price of the best Norfolk barley 34s a 36s per quarter. The stock of oats was also considered to be very abundant indeed; and 18s per quarter the price at which very good horse corn might be bought at the markets in the vicinity of Norfolk; at the Spalding market, which is considered one of the best for oats, the whole quantity on the last market day averaged only 18s per quarter. In Cambridgeshire the best oats are stated to be worth 24s a 26s, and the average price in that county to be 18s per quarter: this was considered *below* the average price of common years, and *below* a remunerating price to the farmer.

NOTE (E.)

A clear and satisfactory elucidation of this point is given in a very intelligent letter, which recently appeared in a London paper, and which comes from the pen of a gentleman, (*Mr. Sandars*) to whom the public are indebted for much valuable information upon the subject of corn distillation. I have introduced an extract of the letter, as particularly applicable to the consideration of the relative value of grain:—

“ We have heard much of the relative value of grain, but “ a reference to past examples will prove the fallacy of the “ calculations generally accredited. We have known wheat “ to be a bad crop, and the price 17s per bushel; the same “ year oats and barley have been plentiful at 4s 6d per “ bushel for the former, and 6s per bushel for the latter. We “ have also known the crop of wheat to be good, and the “ crops of oats and barley to be bad: the former has sold at “ 12s, and the two latter at 5s 6d and 7s, per bushel; which

" proves clearly, that the value of each article depends more
" upon its surplus or deficient quantity than on the surplus or
" deficient quantity of the other, and not altogether on the
wheat " scarcity or abundance, as is generally supposed.

" The consumption of oat and barley meal is never much
" increased but by extremely high prices of wheat; for peo-
" ple do not economize from calculation, but from necessity.
" On this point much of the merits of the case seems to hinge.
" The present price of wheat has alarmed some; but unless
" it advances considerably, they have nothing to fear: it is
" not so high as to encrease the consumption of oatmeal, nor to
" prevent that article falling below the price at which it invari-
" ably sells when wheat is 5s per bushel lower than it now is;
" and from this fact I think we may fairly infer, that distillation
" from oats and barley could be productive of no evil, but of
" much good; so far as it would give the farmer confidence in
" providing for the future."

NOTE (F. 1.)

AN Account of the AVERAGE PRICES of GRAIN in ENGLAND and WALES, at the several Periods respectively, from the Month of July 1795 inclusive, when Prohibitions have been laid on, continued, or removed from the Distillation of Spirits from Grain; specifying at which of the said Periods respectively the Distillation has been prohibited or allowed, and the Price per Quarter of each Grain at the Time when such change took place, and also specifying the present Prices according to the latest Return.—Ordered by the House of Lords to be printed, 12th March, 1810.

ENGLAND AND WALES.					
	Wheat. per Qr.	Rye. per Qr.	Barley per Qr.	Oats per Qr.	Pease, Beans, per Qr.
Distillation prohibited (by Acts of 35 G. III. c. 119, and 36 G. III. c. 20) from 10th July 1795, to 1st February, 1797.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Average Prices for the Week ending nearest to 10th July, 1795	93 10	62 2	45 0	29 2	49 1
Average Prices for the Week ending nearest to 1st February, 1797	52 3	34 1	28 4	15 10	28 1
—	—	—	—	—	—
Distillation prohibited (by Act of 41 G. III. Stat. 1. c. 3.) from 8th December 1800, to 1st January 1802.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Average Prices for the Week ending nearest to 8th December, 1800	133 0	85 3	76 7	41 8	75 11
Average Prices for the Week ending nearest to 1st January, 1802	76 9	48 9	44 1	23 4	43 4
—	—	—	—	—	—
Distillation prohibited (by Act of 48 G. III. c. 118, by Proclamation of the 16th November, 1808, continued to forty days after the Commencement of next Session of Parliament. By 49 G. III. c. 7, by Proclamation of 16th November, 1809, continued to forty days after next Session of Parliament) from 30th June 1808, to 4th March 1810.					
Average Prices for the Week ending nearest to 30th June, 1808	81 6	55 11	44 3	38 10	63 10
Average Prices for the Week ending 17th February, 1810 being the Return to the latest Period	100 1	58 4	46 4	27 5	53 7

NOTE (F. 2.)

An Account of the AVERAGE PRICES of GRAIN in SCOTLAND, at the several Periods respectively, from the Month of July 1795 inclusive, when Prohibitions have been laid on, continued, or removed from the Distillation of Spirits from Grain; specifying at which of the said Periods respectively, the Distillation has been prohibited, or allowed, and the Price per Quarter of each Grain at the Time when such Change took place, and also specifying the present Prices according to the latest Returns.

SCOTLAND.						
	Wheat. per Qr.	Rye. per Qr.	Barley per Qr.	Oats. per Qr.	Pease. per Qr.	Beer or Big per Qr.
Distillation prohibited (by Acts of 35 G. III. c. 119, and 36 G. III. c. 20,) from 17th July 1795, to 1st February 1797.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Average Prices of the four Weeks ending nearest to 17th July, 1795	69 10	27 4	30 6	21 4	33 4	33 5
Average Prices of the four Weeks ending nearest to 1st February, 1797	-	25 8	25 8	17 5	28 5	24 6
Distillation prohibited (by Acts of 39 G. III. s. 2. c. 7, and 39 and 40 G. III. c. 21, 41 G. III. Stat. 1. c. 3, and 42 G. III. c. 5,) from 20th October 1799, to 1st January 1802.						
Average Prices of the four Weeks ending nearest to 20th October, 1799	-	-	71 8	36 10	32 2	45 5
Average Prices of the four Weeks ending nearest to 1st January, 1802	-	-	70 0	38 4	36 5	46 0
Distillation prohibited (by Act of 48th G. III. c. 118, by Proclamation of the 16th Nov. 1808, continued to forty days after the commencement of next Session of Parliament; by 49 G. III. c. 7, by Proclamation of 16th Nov. 1809, continued to forty days after next Session of Parliament,) from 30th June 1808, to 4th March 1810.						
Average Prices of the four Weeks ending nearest to 30th June, 1808	77 9	64 0	48 11	42 5	70 8	71 3
Average Prices of the four Weeks ending 10th February, 1810, being the Return to the latest period	77 8	45 5	38 5	27 1	47 11	48 6
	77					39 0
						33 7

N.B. Returns of the Prices of Grain from Scotland are made Monthly (not Weekly, as in England) pursuant to Act of 31 G. III. c. 30.

NOTE (G.)

This assertion is corroborated by a very recent instance. Upon the 6th of February last the highest price of the best potatoe oats at the Liverpool Corn Exchange is shewn in the statement to have been 4s 2d per bushel.

On the 27th February, when the account was received of the bill, which did not extend the prohibition to Ireland, having passed the House of Commons, the highest price was 4s 6d per bushel. And on the 13th March, when it was known that the bill had passed both Houses, and that the use of grain was allowed in the distilleries of Ireland, at this date the highest price of oats (which it will be recollectcd is the grain principally employed in distillation throughout that country) was 4s 4d per bushel in this market, which is connected considerably more than any other in the kingdom with Ireland. The whole rise which took place in consequence of the use of grain being permitted in Ireland was only 4d per bushel; but this advance was merely nominal, and could not even be supported, until the bill had passed the Lords, for the prices almost immediately fell; and from the statement it will be found that the best Irish potatoe oats are reduced to 4s per bushel, which is absolutely **BELLOW** what the rate was when the prohibition was in force; and even at this price no material sales can be effected. This very recent instance supplies, I presume, a satisfactory refutation of the alleged objection.

NOTE (H.)

A Return of the Quantity of Corn imported into Liverpool and the other Ports of Great Britain, from Ireland, from the 1st January, 1809, to the latest period to which the same can be made up.—Ordered by the House of Lords to be printed, 5th March, 1810.

	Imported between the 5th January, 1809, and the 5th January, 1810.					
	Liverpool.		Other Ports of Great Britain.		Total.	
	Quarters.	Bush.	Quarters.	Bush.	Quarters.	Bush.
Barley	11473	3	2523	0	13996	3
Beans	2537	1	....	....	2537	1
Oats	366186	6	415852	2	782039	0
Pease.....	16	4	1	0	17	4
Rye	401	6	....	....	401	6
Wheat	52901	4	1663	4	54565	0
	Cwt.	qrs. lbs	Cwt.	qr. lbs	Cwt.	qrs. lbs
Oatmeal	11041	0 1	53846	1 2	64887	1 3
Wheat Flour..	10005	3 0	100	0 0	10105	3 0

[Since the 5th January to the 24th April, 1810, there have been imported into Liverpool, from Ireland,

Qrs. Qrs. Qrs. Qrs.
 Wheat, 42628 | Oats, 97,106 | Barley, 1404 | Total, 141,138.]

NOTE (I.)

Statement of the Amount of Import in Wheat, Flour, Barley, and Oats, from Foreign Countries, into Great Britain, for Five Years, ending 5th January, 1808.

[Taken from the Appendix to the Report of the Committee, page 193.]

YEAR.	WHEAT.	FLOUR.	BARLEY.	OATS.
	Quarters.	Cwt.	Quarters.	Quarters.
1803	182641	302992	1093	251573
1804	365009	16858	9071	500151
1805	818147	54503	27634	274156
1806	126911	244730	2058	183198
1807	182558	497231	2963	425904

NOTE (K. 1.)

An Account of the Quantities of each Sort of Grain which have been imported from the different Countries of Europe respectively, under Licence or otherwise, from the 1st January, 1809, to the latest period to which the same can be made up.—Ordered by the House of Lords to be printed, 5th March, 1810.

COUNTRIES.	Imported into the Port of London between the 5th Jan. 1809, and the 5th Jan. 1810.									
	BARLEY.	BEANS.	IND. CORN.	OATS.	PEASE.	RYE.	RYE-MEAL.	WHEAT.	WHEAT FLOUR.	
	Qrs. Bs.	Qrs. B.	Qrs. B.	Qrs. Bs.	Qrs. B.	Qrs. Bs.	Cwt. qr. lbs.	Qrs. Bs.	Cat. qr. lbs.	
Denmark and Norway	155 0	..	387 0	40 0	..	..	..	8846 0	..
Heligoland	5344 4	8070 4	10100 7	726 0	531 0	..	..	6003 3	..
Russia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3437 4	..
Sweden	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	780 4	..
Poland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1349 0	..
Prussia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	185 0	..
Germany	296 0	4863 0	..	87701 1	4405 1	412 0	..	26263 0	..	
Holland	1212 0	9833 7	..	184547 7	9205 0	11776 5	..	91408 6	737 1 20	
Flanders	..	..	..	..	420 0	5 5	..	18045 0	..
France	..	..	..	..	..	4 7	395 0	14187 0	8757 2 13
Sicily, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1066 0	62 3 6
Total	7015 4	23119 3389	6283156 7	24852 43514 6	528 0 20	171564 1	9557 3 11			

N.B. The Returns from the Out-ports not yet received.

NOTE (K. 1.)

Note (K. 2.)

An Account of the Importation of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, into the Port of London, in the Months of September, October, November, and December, 1809; the Month of January, and up to the 17th February 1810; distinguishing each Month, and the Importation of each Article, and whether such Importations came from the Out Ports, from Ireland, or from Foreign Countries.

NOTE (L.)

The farmers are in general disposed to prefer grazing to tillage, because it is attended with less uncertainty, is conducted with less expence, and is not subject to the payment of tythes. Hence tillage requires the constant and zealous encouragement of the Legislature. In England and Wales,

3,160,000 acres of land are employed in cultivation of wheat,
861,000 do. do. do. barley,
2,872,000 do. do. do. oats and beans.

6,893,000 acres of land only are employed in the cultivation of
grain of every description;—whereas
17,479,000 acres of land are employed in pasturage.

APPENDIX.

Fourth Report from the Committee on the Distillation
of Sugar and Molasses, &c. communicated by the
Commons to the Lords, and ordered to be printed
26th February, 1810.

DISTILLATION OF SUGAR AND MOLASSES, &c.

THE COMMITTEE appointed to inquire, and report, how far and under what Circumstances, it may be practicable and expedient to confine the DISTILLERIES of the United Kingdom to the use of SUGAR and MOLASSES only; and also what other Provision can be made for the Relief of the GROWERS of SUGAR in the BRITISH WEST INDIA COLONIES; and to report the same, with their Observations and Opinion thereupon, from time to time, to the House:—and who were empowered to report the MINUTES of the EVIDENCE taken before them:—

HAVE, pursuant to the Order of the House, further examined the matters to them referred; and have agreed to the following—

REPORT.

YOUR committee next proceeded to inquire whether any and what relief might be afforded to the colonies, by reducing the prohibitory duty on the importation of refined sugar, to a duty which should be merely equivalent to that on raw sugar.

It may be proper to premise, that there is a process called claying, which does not subject the sugar to the prohibitory duty, and makes it liable only to an additional duty of 4s per cwt., which is not more than proportionate to its additional value. This is, however, not what is meant by refined, which is, properly speaking, sugar that has undergone solution, and a fresh granulation, and such sugar is charged with a duty of £8. 8s. per cwt.; which acts as an absolute prohibition of its import.

The advantages which the planter would derive from refining his sugar, before he imports it, are these:

First, The immense loss would be avoided which now arises from drainage in the passage, amounting to nearly one-eighth of the whole. This loss to the planter, if sugar be estimated at its shipment at the low rate of 25s per cwt. is not less on the whole importation than

£.600,000 per annum. It is indeed alleged, that this loss might be avoided by claying, but it appears that the process of claying is not applicable to all sugars, and, from its increasing disuse, it seems to be regarded as by no means beneficial.

Another benefit to the planter would arise from the great increase of his distillery; for every cwt. of sugar refined would furnish materials for the distillation of nearly three gallons of Rum, and this additional distillation would be accompanied by no additional expence.

A third benefit to be expected by the planter would be the reduction of his home freight. At present the ships on an average obtain barely one-third of a freight out, and are therefore obliged to charge two-thirds of their freight out on their freight home. Should the refinery take place to any considerable extent, there would be a large export of coals and utensils. Besides, as the freight home is paid not on the sugar that is taken on board, but on what is landed, it follows that the freight of that eighth of the sugar which is lost on the passage must be charged on the remainder. Were this waste avoided, it is obvious that on this account only the freight home might be reduced one-eighth, without loss to the ship-owner, and this would

be, at the present rate of freight, a saving to the planter of about £.300,000 on his whole import.

Lastly, a benefit of no small importance may arise to the colonies from the number of Europeans which would be wanted in various capacities for the refinery ; and by this means would be obviated the alarming decrease of white population, which the present distress of the colonies cannot fail to accelerate. To this may be added, that the refinery would furnish to a considerable number of the negroes an employment superior to that of field labour, and thereby contribute to that gradation among them, on which their improvement and well being so much depends.

To the shipping interest, it does not appear that any injury could possibly occur. Instead of a cwt. of raw sugar, the freight home would be 56lb. of refined, 22lb. of bastard sugar, and three gallons of rum, which is at least equivalent.

With regard to the revenue, it is clear that if the duty laid on the refined sugar and the bastard should equal in amount that of the raw sugar which produced it, no loss could arise. In some other points of view the alteration would be beneficial to the revenue. The waste being avoided, a greater quantity would arrive,

and arriving at no additional expence, it might be afforded cheaper. The consumption thereby promoted, the duties must also increase. The revenue would also gain in another way. It has been found impossible to prevent the molasses produced in the refinery from getting illegally into distillation, by which the revenue is materially injured. No such consequence could result from molasses produced in the West Indies, as the article is not of sufficient value to pay the charge of importation.

It has been observed, that the planter loses one-eighth of his produce ; one-eighth of his capital may therefore be regarded as unproductive. The same remark applies to the shipping ; being obliged to take on board a quantity of sugar, equal to one-eighth, which does not arrive, it follows that one-eighth of the West India shipping is also unproductive. Capital, under such circumstances, not only detracts from the income of individuals, but is so much loss of national stock ; and in this light must be regarded the two sums before stated, making an aggregate loss to individuals and to the nation of £.900,000 annually.

It is next to be considered, what effect such alteration of the duty would have on the domestic refinery, for the encouragement of which

it was obviously first imposed. In as far as the colonial refinery might be promoted by such alteration, there can be no doubt but the domestic refinery must decrease; and if this effect were extensive and immediate, the greatest injury could not fail to arise to those, who, on the faith of existing laws, had embarked their capitals in these establishments.

Presuming that the House would not entertain a measure which could have such an effect, without, at the same time, entertaining a consideration of compensation to the individuals who might be injured by it, your committee thought it incumbent on them to make inquiry as to the amount of these capitals and the nature of their investment.

It is stated that there were, two years ago, 364 refining pans in employ in London alone, but that 70 of these are now out of employ. The number of pans in other parts of the United Empire are supposed to be 240, and it is presumed that an equal proportion of these, viz. 46, are from the same causes now unemployed. The total then would be 488 pans in employ, and 116 out of employ.

The capital requisite for each pan is stated to be £.3000, of which two-thirds are allotted to the buildings, and one-third to the utensils.

To keep a pan at work, a further capital of £.6000 in London, and a larger sum in the out-ports, is requisite for the purchase of sugar, and to discharge the current expences. But this latter capital does not come into the present view, as it would not be engaged were the refinery to stop. Allowing then £.3000 for each pan, it would amount to £.1,464,000 for those that are in employ, and £.348,000 for those which are out of employ. But as this latter capital may perhaps at any rate not become again productive, it would hardly be reasonable to allow for it as though it were so at present, and perhaps half the value only might be considered as liable to depreciation. This deduction would leave the total of the buildings and utensils subjected to loss at £.1,638,000; this would not however be total loss, for many of the buildings would be convertible to other purposes, and of all, the site and materials would retain their value, neither would the utensils be entirely lost. An estimate of this nature cannot be expected to be exact, but it is perhaps not wide of the mark to say, that the total eventual loss would be one-half of their cost, or £.819,000.

Your committee thought it right to present to the House the extreme case, in order to shew

that even the extreme case could not occasion a loss equal to that which arises *annually* in the present system.

This extremity could however hardly occur. Your committee have already observed, that in a matter so new, it is impossible to say what difficulties might arise, entirely to obstruct the progress of refinery in the West Indies. At any rate it is probable, that from want of capital there, such progress would be very gradual, and that the colonial refinery would at last be confined to such sugars as are exposed to the greatest waste in the passage, and are least able to pay their freight in a raw state. Thus it may be supposed that ultimately not above one-half of the domestic refineries would be superseded by those of the West Indies ; and therefore not above half the above-mentioned injury could arise, and even this would be rendered less by its being gradual, and in great part remote.

So much however is certain, that in as far as the measure shall produce any effect, that effect will be highly beneficial to the planter and the nation, and that the benefits arising from it, will furnish ample funds for compensating any injury that it could produce. On the other hand, should the refinery not succeed in the West Indies, it cannot be imagined that from an un-

successful speculation any serious injury could arise to the refiners of this country.

In the course of their inquiries, it has appeared obvious to your committee, that effectual relief to the West Indian colonies was only to be expected in one of the three following ways: a change of their staple commodity, sugar, for some more lucrative produce; a reduction of the expences attending its cultivation and sale; or an advance of price, whether effected by an increase of the demand or a diminution of the supply. The first of these modes has been represented as impracticable, and if it be practicable, it could not be effected to so great an extent, and within so short a time, as to prevent the ruin of a great proportion of West Indian proprietors. Difficulties nearly equal have been alleged to exist, in the way of an efficient reduction of the expence attending the cultivation and sale of colonial produce; and against opening new markets in any of the modes hitherto proposed, a pertinacious struggle has been maintained by different parties, each of them respectively jealous of the alterations suggested in the present system, as likely to be injurious to their particular interests. As to a diminution of the supply, it could not be effected without loss, except by the discovery

of some profitable mode of employing the labour of the negroes, which (as is above stated) has not yet been devised ; and this object, even if it had been otherwise attainable, must have been defeated by the great increase of colonial produce created by our recent conquests.

Under such circumstances, your committee could not but favorably entertain the consideration of a plan for employing sugar in fattening cattle. The advantages of this scheme, supposing the success to be but moderately answerable to the expectations formed, are obvious and peculiar ; the relief it offers would be of the most desirable kind, that of opening a new source of consumption ;—within ourselves, and therefore independent of external accident, or war ; not interfering with the interest of any body of men whatever ; extensive in proportion to the degree in which it should prove beneficial to those great classes, the feeders and consumers of cattle ; and on the favorable supposition of eminent success, it would be attended with this especial advantage, that whatever increase of the price of sugar might be occasioned by the increased consumption from this cause, the burthen would fall generally on the whole country, and might perhaps be even compensated by a reduction in the price of cattle,

arising from the improvement in the mode of feeding them. The positive evidence in favour of this plan cannot be stated as very strong ; nor indeed could such be expected, while the public attention has not been immediately called to the subject, and experiments have been so discouraged by the cost of the material, as to prevent their having been tried to any satisfactory extent, or in sufficient variety to ascertain accurately either the absolute or the comparative advantage of the practice. A nearly universal current of opinion may however be alleged in support of it ; nor would it be difficult to produce high commendatory authorities from writers upon the subject of aliment in almost every country, with which the observations of the best informed colonists entirely agree. The apparent results from the evidence of an honorable member of this House appear discouraging ; but it does not seem impossible to account for them, without concluding against the general effect of sugar given in larger quantities and in a less diluted form. Experiments, which it is hoped will prove more decisive, are about to be instituted. As however it is evident, that even the present price of sugar, swelled as it is by the duty, must prove an insuperable bar to its adoption for this purpose, your committee

thought it adviseable to inquire into the possibility of admitting a drawback, to be received on all so employed, without risk to the present revenue, which appears by the evidence of Mr. Frewin to form the only ground of doubt concerning the allowance.

On private application, Mr. Parkes, a very intelligent practical chemist, took the subject into consideration, and in a manner very creditable to his public spirit, undertook a course of experiments, and has detailed in a very clear and able paper (which will be found in his evidence) several substances, which appear capable of being so united with sugar, as to prevent its being again used either for common economical purposes, or in wash for distillation, and from which it cannot be again separated without very considerable skill, difficulty, and expence, at the same time, not injuring, as is supposed, its nutritive qualities.

That those experiments are however absolutely conclusive, or of themselves form a sufficient basis for legislative provision, your committee mean not to affirm, and therefore do not at present recommend the indulgence alluded to; but they regard the magnitude of the subject, and the prospect of success, as sufficient to justify their having entered on the inquiry, and

to warrant their hope, that before the next Session of Parliament it may be prosecuted with such diligence and zeal as completely to develop the truth.

Your committee are aware, that relief to the growers of sugar has been looked for and solicited in a reduction of the duty paid on the British consumption of that article. Upon this subject it has not been judged necessary to collect specific evidence. It is sufficiently obvious, that the duty in this, as in other cases, ought to be so proportioned as to fall entirely upon the consumer, whereas it is certain, that for some years past, the tax on sugar has been borne not by the consumer, but by the cultivator. It is equally certain, that excessive duties are apt to check consumption.

If a quantity of sugar, considerably exceeding the average ordinary quantity consumed in the United Kingdom, could, at a reduced price, be forced into consumption, the revenue, in effecting that object by lowering the rate of duty, might find a compensation in the extension of that duty to the additional consumption. But the planter, it is evident under his present circumstances, however desirable the object may be to him, is unable to bear that it should be accomplished at his expence, for even now receiv-

ing no return of profit by the present price, the only expedient in his power would be to reduce, in a ruinous manner his cultivation to that point, which should proportion the supply to the existing demand of the mother country. To what extent the consumption of sugar in the United Kingdom might, under judicious encouragement, be carried, must be matter of conjecture; it appears in the evidence before your committée to have been progressive, even under the heavy accumulations of duty, which it has sustained, but more rapidly progressive under those low prices, at which, with much disadvantage and loss to the planter, it has lately been sold.

Your committee think it necessary to state (what the accounts produced before them will fully confirm) that the cultivation of the old British colonies has done little more than keep pace with the extension of British consumption, and that the excessive glut of the market is imputable chiefly to the admission of the produce of the conquered colonies into the privileges of our own, at a time too, when access to the foreign market was subjected to unusual difficulties. Thus circumstanced, the British colonies appear to your committee to have a well-grounded claim upon the legislature for such regulations of duty on home consumption, and

of bounty on exportation, as may place them at least in a situation as advantageous as that which they would have enjoyed had they been left in the exclusive possession of the market of this kingdom. Your committee did, in the first instance, propose a measure which, whilst it promises some immediate relief, must only be considered as a temporary expedient; but they cannot refrain from pressing, under circumstances of such severe distress, the necessity of a reduction of the duty, unless some other effectual modes of relief shall be adopted. They are clearly of opinion, that if a practicable commutation of any part of the duty can be devised, such a reduction must afford relief to the planter, either by diminishing his charges to that amount, if the market price should continue unaltered, or by increasing the number and competition of consumers, if the price should fall.

In this view your committee recommend to the serious attention of the House a regulation of the duty on sugar, to be governed by the average price taken at stated periods, under the authority and directions of the Legislature; a principle which they find recommended by a committee of the House of Commons, in their report presented July 24, 1807; and again, with some variation of detail, suggested in the report of the House of

Assembly of Jamaica, dated November 13, 1807.—Your committee understand that a bill, materially reducing the duty on coffee, is now in its progress through the House, and have not therefore thought it necessary to enter into any particular investigation of that subject. They cannot, however, refrain from expressing their opinion, that this measure, inasmuch as it may tend to increase the consumption of coffee, will not only benefit the grower of that article, by relieving the market from the present glut, but may prove of ultimate advantage to the grower of sugar, by withdrawing a proportion of the negroes to another object of cultivation. It must also tend to the additional security of the islands, by increasing the number of that middling class of white settlers, upon whom their defence so greatly depends.

Your committee having now gone through the consideration of all the measures that have been suggested to them in pursuance of the orders of the House, before they close their final report, feel it to be their duty to state, that nothing has occurred since their appointment which has opened the prospect of any improvement in the situation of the West Indian body; and therefore they cannot forbear to press on the serious consideration of the House, the several reports that have been laid on your table.

THE detail of the experiments of Mr. Parkes, which appeared in the *first edition*, has been omitted in this edition, on account of its considerable length, and because it had only a remote connection with the immediate object of this publication.

The following Protest has been introduced into the present edition, because it contains the sentiments of men illustriously distinguished for political wisdom, and because the impolicy of continuing the prohibition of distillation from grain is stated with remarkable perspicuity and force :

PROTEST

*Against the Third Reading of the Corn Distillation
Prohibition Bill.*

DISSENTIENT,

1st, Because we are desirous of distinctly expressing the strongest disapprobation of the indecent and unjustifiable manner in which the proceedings on this bill have been conducted—read a second time upon the first sitting day after

it was brought from the Commons, before any of the papers called for by the House, as necessary to enable them to judge of the expediency of the measure, could be laid on the table;—it is now sanctioned by a third reading, before the production of much of that information which had been called for as indispensable, under the extraordinary circumstance of this House having rejected the prayer of some of the petitioners, for leave to state at the bar the unparalleled grievances which they must sustain, and of their having refused to benefit by the information they might have derived from the judges on a question material to their decision, on which the highest authorities differed.

To us it appears, that this course, highly irregular and reprehensible, even in measures of the slightest moment, when adopted in cases like the present, where the greatest national interests are involved, must bring the House of Lords into contempt, by impressing the public mind with a belief that we are assembled here merely to register those edicts which the executive government may choose to recommend.

2dly, Because the House of Lords having hitherto abstained from all inquiry into the important subject of the propriety of stopping the

distillation of grain, we are compelled, in estimating the merits of the bill, to resort to the details and opinions contained in the reports communicated by the Commons House of Parliament: and it does appear to us incomprehensible how the propriety of enacting it into a law can be maintained on the authority of reports, wherein the committee have expressly declared,—that nothing in the evidence before them could induce them to recommend a permanent prohibition of distillation of grain, which would be attended with great evils to the agriculture of the country—evils that are in that report emphatically stated as only to be exceeded by the effects of the repetition of the measure which is now sanctioned for the third time by this bill.

3dly, Because whether we contemplate the interest of the agriculturist;—or that of the West India planter, oppressed with an over-growth of sugars, occasioned by a fictitious demand;—or even the great and important object of securing at all times an abundance of food for the people of this country;—we are alike called upon to reprobate the short-sighted policy on which the continued repetition of this measure is recommended.

To the British farmer this prohibition must be

highly detrimental,—by diminishing the growth of barley, on the cultivation of which our improved system of agriculture mainly depends.

To the West India planter it is still more injurious;—by the temporary premium it affords, it flatters the hopes of those whose estates can only grow sugar with a profit when the price of the commodity is artificially sustained, and this induces them to persevere in a trade injurious to themselves, and destructive of the interests of their fellow planters, whose estates are only prevented from producing an adequate profit by those ruinous speculations, which this measure is calculated to prolong.

But above all, we must regard this bill as fatal to the interests of the poorer order of the people of this country, who rely on grain for their sustenance. If the production of all commodities naturally and inevitably suits itself to the demand, the quantity of grain grown must, by enacting it into a law, be diminished;—and stopping of the distilleries can no longer be resorted to as a salutary palliative for the evils of an unproductive season. Thus, a year of scarcity may be turned into a year of famine; and the people may, by this improvident measure, be exposed to that extreme want, from which they have been long

protected by the more prudent policy that, till of late, has been pursued.

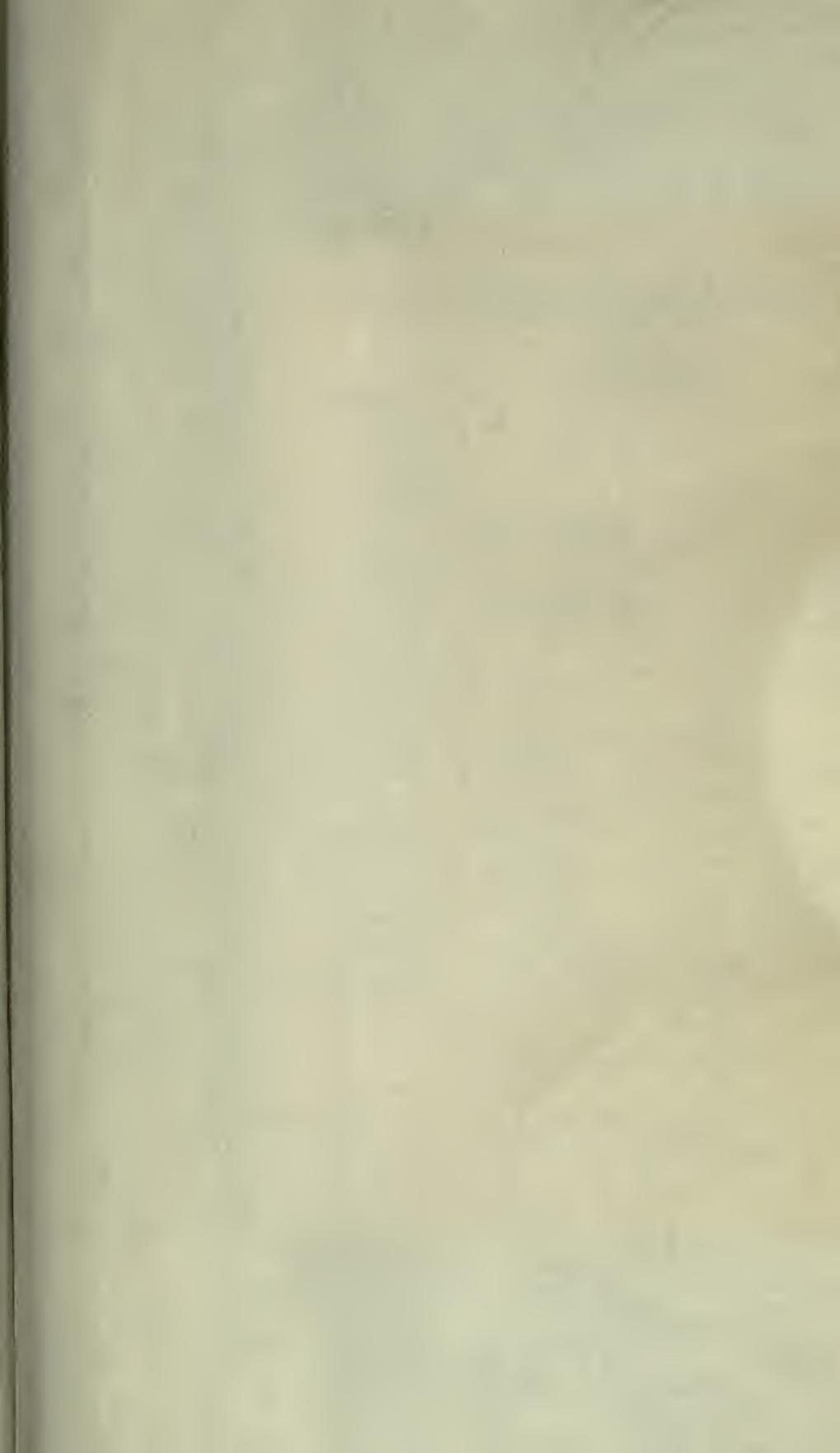
LAUDERDALE,	DUTTON, (M. of Douglas.)
GRENVILLE,	HARDWICK,
ROSSLYN,	ST. JOHN,
KEITH,	ESSEX,
LANSDOWNE,	ALBEMARLE.

DISSENTIENT, for the second and third reasons assigned in the above protest ; and because in bills of this nature, the evils which it may be possible to foresee at the period of their enactment, form but a part of those which it is reasonable to apprehend will flow from their adoption : and although, in every measure calculated to act for the relief of existing distress, it is necessary to have due regard to the preservation of other interests which may be injured by its operation, it becomes us to be doubly cautious in adopting an expedient, by which the agricultural interests of the country will be materially affected. These interests, of a nature so complicated, and of such vital importance, can never, with prudence, be made the subject of legislative interference but under the pressure of an obvious and indispensable necessity, of which, at the present time, there is no reason to credit the existence.

ABERDEEN.

THE END.

Printed by G. F. Harris, Brothers, Liverpool.





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Dixon, William, the Younger
An inquiry into the impolicy of the
continuance of the prohibition of distillation
from grain, in Great-Britain. 2d ed.

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